

LOUIS DESMARAIS EXPECTED TO RUN AS TORY

ANONYMOUS¹

Progressive Conservative party officials here say party leader Joe Clark will likely announce next week that Louis Desmarais, chairman of the *Council for Canadian Unity* will seek the tory nomination in a Quebec riding in the coming federal election.

A party organizer, who declined to be identified, said yesterday that Clark is expected to hold a news conference here on Monday to announce the names of

¹ Anonymous, "Louis Desmarais Expected to Run as Tory," *The Montreal Gazette*, 31 March 1978, 6. [Edited by Christopher Richard Wade Dettling, 2016]

several prominent Quebecers who will be Conservative candidates in the next election widely anticipated for June.

Other people the organizer mentioned as likely candidates were Augustin Roy, president of the *Quebec College of Physicians and Surgeons*, and André Payette, a Montreal television announcer.

Desmarais was on a Florida holiday and could not be reached for comment. His secretary said nobody knows, not even himself, whether he will run.

He has been the subject of increasing speculation, and published reports have said he has held off on an announcement because he is uncertain about which riding to run in.

Desmarais left the chairmanship of *Canada Steamship Lines* last year to devote more time to the

unity council, a voluntary group made up largely of businessmen.

He is the elder brother of Paul Desmarais, who has close Liberal ties and is chairman of *Power Corporation*, the holding company which owns *Canada Steamship Lines*.

Augustin Roy said in an interview he preferred “to say neither yes nor no” as to whether he was going into politics. He said there was false speculation prior to the 1976 Quebec election that he would be a Parti Quebecois candidate and he didn’t want to fuel speculation now.

André Payette could not be reached. Nor could Alfred Bosse, a former Liberal member of the *National Assembly*, defeated in 1976, who is rumoured to have considered a Conservative nomination.

The Conservatives have nominated candidates in 13 of Quebec's 75 redistributed federal ridings. Of the party's three sitting MPs, Roch LaSalle and Heward Grafftey have announced they intend to run again, but Claude Wagner's future is uncertain.

The nomination meeting in Wagner's St. Hyacinthe riding has not yet been scheduled.

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